

William A. Farnsworth Homestead
21 Elm Street
Rockland
Knox County
Maine

HABS No. ME-77

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7-ROCLA
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

WILLIAM A. FARNSWORTH HOMESTEAD

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Location: 21 Elm Street, Rockland, Knox County, Maine

Present Owner and Occupant: William A. Farnsworth Library and Art Museum, Rockland, Maine

Present Use: Museum

Brief Statement of Significance: This house, now a museum, was built for a wealthy Rockland merchant, William A. Farnsworth.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Captain William A. Farnsworth, Miss Lucy Farnsworth.
2. Date of arection: About 1854.
3. Buildar, suppliers, etc.: Probably built by W. H. Glover Lumber Company.
4. Important old views: Shown on 1855 map of city of Rockland, Lincoln County, Maine, by D. S. Osborne, published by E. M. Woodward, 80 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, in possession of Elmer C. Davis.
5. Source of information: Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Davia, acting for Boston Safa Deposit Trust Company.

B. Supplemental Material: Prepared at the Farnsworth Museum, July 1949:

"The Farnsworths were a typical, prosperous, New England family. Whan Mr. Farnsworth built the present home, the exact date of which is not known but one of the finest in town and probably now over ona hundred years old, he was an important factor in Rockland's business. It is of interest to know that he instituted Rockland's first water system. He died in the South in 1876, at the age of 59 years.

"Mr. and Mrs. William Farnsworth had six children - threa boys and three girls. Two of the boys died when they were very young, leaving James, Fanny, Josephine and Lucy.

"Fanny was the only ona of the children who went away to school. She was really the 'flower of the family', very brilliant and very good-looking. She diad in 1877 at the age of 24.

"James owned a house on Cedar Street in Rockland, which was completely furnished at the time of his death in 1905. After the death of the other members of the family, this came into the possession of Miss Lucy.

"Josephine married Mr. Charles Rollins. They had a very beautiful home in Boston. Mr. Rollins died leaving the home and all his property to his wife. She died in 1907, and all her estate came to her mother. The mother died in 1910, and all of the property was then inherited by Miss Lucy.

"Miss Lucy, the last survivor, lived to be nearly 97. She possessed a rare business ability, and was keen and alert to the last. In manner she was a quiet sweet little lady, refined, and leading a sheltered life, not caring to mingle in society. She lived alone for many years, except for a hired man who was employed during the time she had a horse. After the horse died, she lived alone, as there was no further need of a hired man.

"Miss Lucy apparently had no interest in taking care of her real estate, as the house in Boston was in such a dilapidated condition that the City of Boston finally condemned it, and it was torn down. Some of Josephine's furnishings were sent to the Homestead here in Rockland, but a good part of the contents of the house had been stolen long before the house was razed. The residence of James on Cedar Street was also in a very bad condition, and almost everything in the house had been stolen.

"Miss Lucy died in 1935, at which time the Boston Safe Deposit & Trust Company took charge of her large estate as executrix. Since then all of the real estate, except a few pieces of land on the outskirts of the city, and, of course, the Homestead, have been sold. It was her request that the Homestead be put in its original condition and opened to the public on certain dates. This has been fulfilled by the executors who have spared no trouble to carry out even the smallest detail. Everything remains in the various rooms just as they were when Miss Lucy occupied it. The lace curtains are reproductions of the old original ones and are imported from France. Samples of the wall paper from the various rooms were sent to Boston and matched as closely as possible.

"The house, a perfect example of its type, was furnished in the Victorian era, the best of that period. On the left of the front door is the parlor, an impressive room, recalling memories of funerals, weddings, and family gatherings, for which parlors were then used. Here are the original curtains, draperies, cornices, wall paper; the handsome mantel and grate of Thomaston marble; the lovely velvet English carpet which shows no sign of wear; two handsome love-seats with side chairs to match, all in the original satin upholstery, and the marble top table. On the wall is a large oil painting of Miss Lucy and her brother, James, and there is a portrait of Mr. Farnsworth on an easel.

"On the right of the front door is the sitting-room. This has a Victorian love-seat as well as chairs, a marble mantel and grate, and a square piano which is a combination piano and organ and one of a very small number now in existence. Also in this room is the glass show case which Miss Lucy requested bought and used to display her treasures. It is a most interesting display of the things she loved - lace, fans, jewelry, silver, glass, china. The jewelry is especially interesting to visitors. There are some valuable diamond rings and earrings, watches, sets of pearl and coral, and many odd pieces. The seed pearl set is particularly lovely.

"In the dining room the table is set with china and silver as it might be for the family. The sideboard and serving table are replete with family silver - handsome and often unique in design. Opposite this room and back of the parlor is a commodious sleeping-room, with a lavatory and black walnut furniture. This was the mother's room.

"To many the most fascinating room in the house is the kitchen. It is a large room with spatter-work floor, built-in sink, and a Boston rocker by one of the sunny windows. The clock on the mantel ticks cheerily, and on the small shelf below are spread family account books with their intriguing entries dating as far back as 1861 and earlier. But the outstanding object in the room is the cook-stove, a most unusual and early type and doubtless one of the few still in existence today. There is an interesting story told in connection with this stove. It seems there were some years when Miss Lucy and her mother did not speak, although living together - so the stove is divided, having two fire boxes and two ovens, to enable each one to use only her own part. With the stove were the conventional heavy iron tea kettle, frying-pan, trivets and charcoal burners, etc.

"Off this room is a pantry with many beautiful dishes, firkins, and spice boxes. From the kitchen starts the long walk to the stable. Here are the early carriages, wagons, sleighs, and harness room. This recalls Miss Lucy and her hired man, Aaa. For many years they were a familiar sight driving around town.

"The front hall is the customary long hall, with graceful winding stairs. In the upper hall the family Bible attracts attention, many of the items in the spidery hand of years ago now faded and dim. There are four large chambers. The front chamber on the west was Josephine's. The front chamber on the east was Fanny's and here are seen her picture on the mantel and a picture of her class away at school. There are also toys including a doll in an old-fashioned bed, and many books. These two rooms have black walnut furniture. The lovely lace curtains in both rooms are long and are arranged fan-shape on the floor. The draperies in Fanny's room are of particular interest. The back bedroom east was Miss Lucy's room. This has a painted set with sleigh-bed, and it was in this bed Miss Lucy was found dead. Of particular interest in this room is the little

old black handbag she carried for so many years. This little black bag together with the long severe black dress and long crepe veil, sometimes augmented by a small black silk parasol, singled her out for comment over a lengthy period. Those who remember her well often exclaim on seeing the little black bag 'I never saw her without that little black bag . . . ' or words to that effect.

"The back bedroom west was James' room. Here is a very lovely single size black walnut bed which attracts much attention. This room is also complete with lavatory and marble topped furniture.

"Down two steps are two more small bedrooms and the bath. One of the bedrooms was used by the maid, and the other was for the hired man. And last, to the attic, a large airy room reached by yellow painted stairs. It is a room with wide boards in the floor and huge beams stretching overhead. The slanting chimneys built in the days when it was thought a chimney had to go through the ridgepole always attracts attention and brings forth many questions. There is not the usual clutter associated with the attic - only trunks of various sizes, discarded pictures and books, and a few personal things chiefly children's toys such as a sled, a rocking horse, a cart, dolls, dishes, etc."

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Excellent example of the typical mid-nineteenth-century Greek Revival town house built for wealthy commercial and manufacturing people of Maine.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Rectangular-shaped house with appendages. House, two stories, 42' x 50'; appendage, 30' x 80', including two-story attached stable, 30'-7" x 30'-5".
2. Foundations: Granite foundation walls, brick and stone backing.
3. Wall construction: Wood frame, flush horizontal wood siding on house; wood frame, lapped horizontal wood siding on appendage. Wood pilasters at each corner of house.
4. Porches, stoops, etc.: Granite steps.
5. Chimneys: Brick, with brick cap.

6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Front door--Greek Revival, recessed panel door, transom and sidelights; heavy flat entablature and pilasters. Side door--sidelights, four-panel wood door. Two barn doors with transom.
- b. Windows and shutters: Simple Greek Revival trim at the windows. Six-over-six-light wood sash, double hung, wood louvered shutters.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable roof parallel to street covered with slate shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Heavy, plain wood cornice and entablature, projecting eave. Pediment at gable ends. Barn has projecting eave, dentil course in cornice.
- c. Dormers, cupolas: Cupola on attached stable, octagonal, "pointed" roof, wood shutters on all sides. Two double-hung windows, north and south sides only.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Main block--first and second floors: Central-hall plan with four rooms, two rooms on either side of hall.
- b. Ell--first floor: Kitchen with pantry and entrance; second floor: Central hall with three rooms.

2. Stairways:

- a. Primary: Open wood winding stair in central hall.
- b. Secondary: Closed wood stair at end of hall.

3. Flooring: Wood boards, 5" to 8" wide, painted and carpeted except for ell.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Wallpaper over plaster.

5. Doorways and doors: All paneled wood.

6. Trim: Marble mantels in parlor and sitting room. Wood mantels in all other rooms--wood wainscot under windows. Trim original.

7. Hardware: All original in main block--glass door knob, original mechanical door bell.
8. Lighting: Is not original--gas fixtures not operable but original with building.
9. Heating: All fireplaces closed--central hot-air heating system presently used. Cast-iron wood stove in kitchen (G. W. Walker & Co., Model No. 7, Boston, Massachusetts).

D. Site:

1. Orientation: Located at 21 Elm Street, Rockland, Maine, the house faces south on a large level lot.
2. Enclosures: Wood fence and gates.
3. Outbuildings: Storage shed--wood shed and carriage barn, all joined to main building.

Prepared by F. Blair Reeves, Architect
National Park Service
August 1960

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Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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Data pages 1 through 6 were previously transmitted to the Library of Congress. This is data page 7.

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- 2 4" x 6" glass plate negatives (one stereopair) produced by James Replogle in 1960.

One survey control contact print per plate; survey control information for the pair.

LC-HABS-GS07-06L *

BARN CUPOLA

LC-HABS-GS07-06R

BARN CUPOLA

Left and right overlap: 95%

PROJECT INFORMATION STATEMENT

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